



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ laboratory receives national award**

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality’s laboratory won the national 2006-2007 Gold Standard Award for public health laboratory excellence. The recognition acknowledges the agency’s significant contributions to the technical advancement of public health laboratory science and/or practice. The award was presented on June 5, by the Association of Public Health Laboratories at their annual meeting in Jacksonville, Fla.

In the aftermaths of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, DEQ’s laboratory handled more than 134,000 samples, of which 127,000 were associated with the hurricanes. The award also commended the agency’s lab team for developing the most complete, comprehensive and widely accepted set of emergency analytical methods in the United States. The methods have been distributed to 14 states.

“The laboratory’s performance has brought great credit upon the agency and Louisiana,” said DEQ Laboratory Administrator Melvin Mitchell. “The lab staff is deserving of this award after 19 months of operating under extremely challenging condition following the hurricanes of 2005. This award also validates that our lab is one of the most rigorous and diverse analytical testing facilities in the United States. It is even more noteworthy when you consider we accomplished this while understaffed by nearly 20 percent.”

In 2006 DEQ’s laboratory successfully underwent an exhaustive environmental accreditation audit to become nationally accredited for producing quality data. This year it is projected they will analyze more than 133,000 samples. The 47,000 square-foot laboratory is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and is the largest and newest state-owned environmental laboratory. For more information about the DEQ laboratory, visit [www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov), call 225-219-9800 or toll free at 1-866-896-5337.